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**Promoting Your Online Writing Portfolio**

**By The StoryMaster**

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Dear Writing Reader,

One of the most popular questions from Authors on my site, Writing.Com, is:  
"How do I promote my Online Writing Portfolio outside of Writing.Com?"

Here are my top five tips for increasing the amount of exposure to anyone's online Writing Portfolio:

Tip #1: Add your Online Writing Portfolio URL to your email signatures.

The simplest way to promote your Portfolio's URL is to add it to the email signature of any and all email accounts you have. With just a few minutes of your time, you'll turn any correspondence you have into referral generating machines! Here's a couple quick examples:

Check out my portfolio!  
<http://www.Writing.Com/authors/storymaster>

or

I'm an Author @ Writing.Com!  
<http://www.Writing.Com/authors/storymaster>

Tip #2: Link to your Public Portfolio from your homepage or other sites you control.

Next on the simplicity ladder is linking to your public portfolio from your personal homepage or business website. You can provide your site's visitors with a text link or create a logo for your online portfolio.

Ebay and other auction sites are also great places to get added exposure. The next time you list something for sale, don't forget to add your portfolio URL and you'll have your site's visitor count on the

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rise in no time!

Tip #3: Directly invite family, friends, teachers, coworkers, publishers, agents, editors and more to visit your online writing portfolio.

Inviting your own family and friends doesn't always have the highest appeal... Afterall, its not necessarily their opinion you want and you can ask them to read your writing any time you want. But, reading something online is different and often opens up someone to provide a better and more realistic critique of your work.

Plus, these real life contacts may be the one to forward your portfolio URL to someone else's friend or family member who lends that helping hand or offers the right word of encouragement to brighten your

day.

Teachers, co-workers, editors, publishers and other associates are also great people to refer!

Tip #4: Create business cards with your online writing portfolio URL and hand them to friends, associates and other people you may meet who are interested in reading or writing.

Anyone can create their own business cards. The least expensive route is to purchase ready-to-print business card paper sold at stores such as Staples, OfficeMax, Walmart and others. The paper is heavy cover stock and is perforated which makes each business card clean and easy to separate! If you'd like the whole thing done for you, Staples, Kinkos and others business shops offer complete and inexpensive business card creation services.

When you design your own cards to hand out, include basic information about your portfolio. Your Portfolio URL and email address are two things that everyone should include. You might also include a 'tag line' about your writing style or favorite genres. For example: "Specializing in Horror and Science Fiction" or "Writing Romance and Mystery Novels of Young Adults" or "Featuring the action packed adventures of 'Jack Rubble'".

Tip #5: Include your Portfolio URL when posting in relevant newsgroups, groups or discussion forums.

Posting your Public Portfolio URL on non-Writing.Com message boards, clubs and newsgroups can bring tremendous amounts of interest. There are countless online gathering places that focus on specific genres such as romance, sci-fi, fanfiction... or more general writing such as poetry or short stories.

Remember: Internet etiquette states that you should not post in a newsgroup or forum unless your post can stay on topic. Bulk emailing and other "spam" like tactics are NOT acceptable and will not be tolerated by most websites and webmasters!

Otherwise... Good luck and have fun promoting your writing portfolio!

~~ The StoryMaster

<http://StoryMaster.Writing.Com/>

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The StoryMaster is WebMaster @ Writing.Com ( <http://www.Writing.Com/> ). Established in 2000, Writing.Com is the online community for readers and writers of all ages and interests. Whether you're a casual reader searching for a good story or a creative writer looking for the perfect place to improve your skills, Writing.Com is the site for you!

## **Writing For Free: When & When Not to Do It!**

**By Yuwanda Black**

Right off the bat, I want to say that there is no right or wrong answer to this topic. A lot depends on your end goal — to get a job, garner publicity, build a portfolio, etc. However, there comes a time when every writer should say no to writing for free. Below are some issues that I've been pondering about freelance writing.

Issue 1: Content for websites. Content is king on the Internet and everyone wants something fresh and unique on a regular basis. If you are promoting a product/service and write articles to generate publicity, then by all means, give the content away.

However, if what you are selling is your writing skill and are not promoting anything, then don't give it away. You'd be better off doing a direct mail campaign and spending your time creating pieces for your portfolio — even if they are only make-believe companies.

One could argue that the reason good writing is taken for granted is so many give it away. I give a lot of content away, but only within the framework of WIIFM (what's in it for me).

Issue 2: Writing on spec: For those of you who don't know what this is, see this excellent primer article at

This established freelance writer explains spec

writing brilliantly. The bottom line, once your portfolio is complete with good samples, stop this practice.

The exception would be if it's a credit from a noted source that you really want. After all, who's going to turn down Fortune? However, I believe there's a big enough need for good writers that you don't have to sell your soul for one credit, even if it is a "biggie."

How many samples should you have? I advise between five and ten. Try to get them from different sources — eg, two newspaper, three websites, two brochure, one sales letter, etc. This will give your portfolio a range. Nonprofits, friends with small businesses, neighborhood shops — all are possible non-paid sources to build your writing credits.

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A tip: Choose a small business and do the brochure, sales letter, etc. first. Then, send it to your target and ask if they would mind if you included it in your portfolio. I don't know any small business that would refuse a well-written promotional piece that doesn't cost them a dime. Bang, a legitimate credit!

Issue 3: Original Content & Rights: I don't believe in giving away original content — again, unless you are promoting a product/service or are just starting out. I am constantly amazed at the number of publications that want original content but don't want to pay for it.

An example. I write a small business column. An editor saw it and approached me to be a regular contributor to their publication, which is quite noted in business circles. The kicker? They didn't want my column but wanted me to contribute original content with no pay. I had to turn them down. I offered

the column at no charge (since I already write it), but explained that original content outside of this without payment was not possible.

If you write, then you know it's not easy coming up with original content on a regular basis. Some subjects are so covered that nine times out of ten, new ground is never being broken. We are usually just putting a new spin on it. This costs brain cells! And, trust me, not everybody can do it.

So, the next time you put finger to keyboard, think about your objective. If we all stopped giving away our pearls of wisdom, then the pay level across the board would be raised.

May be reprinted with inclusion of the following: Yuwanda Black is an entrepreneur, author, speaker and syndicated small business columnist whose focus is controlling your destiny through small business ownership. Her most recent e-books, *How to Really Make a Living as an Editorial Freelancer* and *Advice from Successful Freelancers: How They Built Their Careers & How You Can Too!* are available for immediate download at

Visit her on the

web at

for a complete list of how-to, small business books and articles.

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Building Your Online Portfolio  
What Publications Should Look for in a Technology Writer

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